A review of occupational illnesses and injuries in two offshore oil rigs in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Background: The search for oil reserves has led to deep offshore drilling in hazardous environments, posing logistical problems to providing medical services to workers in these challenging environments. There is little knowledge of the incidence or changes in incidence compared to previous reviews of occupational illnesses and injuries amongst oil and gas works in Nigeria.

Aims: To review the incidence of occupational illnesses and injuries on two oil rigs in Nigeria over 1 year, determine major causes of evacuation or referral onshore and training needs for health care workers on these installations.

Methods: A retrospective case series study of clinic visits over 1 year, with ICD 10 classification and data analysis by comparing frequencies and incidence rates across different groups.

Results: 1554 and 1609 cases were reviewed and noted to be dominated by males and Nationals. A reversal in trend of referral was observed in contrast to past study. 28.3% of onshore referrals were previously due to injuries, while no referral onshore in the current study was due to injuries. Majority of visits and referrals were from workers in drilling and maintenance department.

Conclusion: There is overall improvement in safety on the rigs, but a need to introduce training modules for common disease occurrences for health workers on rigs and health promotion plans for enhanced awareness of these conditions.

Key words: Occupational illnesses; occupational injuries; oil and gas; retrospective; case series; drill ship; offshore; Nigeria; referrals; rig sickbay.